



SATURDAY KID BITS

Some students at Shawano schooled as hams

By MARY MADUSCHA

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SHAWANO — Students of Franklin Middle School, Shawano, have caught their teacher's enthusiasm for the world of electronics.

"And that was the purpose of my ham radio class . . . to alert the students to electronics, which is their future," said Alfred Hovey, a science teacher of 16 years at the school.

The students are learning how to operate amateur or ham radio. A person who operates an amateur radio station is called a "ham."

The amateur radio operator class was started in April 1980. It is open to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students interested in radio.

There are 35 students involved, including four girls. "Girls tend to shy away, but are beginning to see the important use of electronics," Hovey said.

The group meets once a week at 7:30 a.m., before classes start. This is an outside interest of the students and does not interfere with their classes.

"I can be sure to find at least one student in before their classes

start, learning the Morse Code or radio regulations, listening to the set or tinkering with the electronic equipment," said Hovey.

There is a computer in the room that the students use. The computer registers code and teletype of the radio.

Hovey spends extra time and shares his knowledge as a licensed ham radio operator with these students.

Before a room was set aside and equipment readied for the students at school, Hovey held the class in his home and allowed them to use his own radio.

He shows them the fun and excitement of receiving and sending to other countries.

A ham can reach other amateur radio operators all over the world. They have often relayed messages to one another to find out about relatives of people who live in areas struck by an earthquake, tornado or some other storm which may cut off regular communication lines, such as telephone wires.

There are three students who are now licensed novice ham operators. Two are in the seventh grade and one in the eighth grade.

The students have talked with radio "hams" in 42 foreign countries, with the latest the Philippine Islands. They have heard from 29 states.

Hovey has a collection of 171 countries which he has reached by radio, of which 151 have been confirmed by postcard.

Last summer Hovey and other Shawano area ham operators helped the students start up and run a ham radio station during the Centennial Exposition days in Shawano. The station ran from 3 p.m. and stayed on the air all night.

Along with the project, the students worked in designing a Centennial Certificate, honoring Shawano's 100 Years. This certificate could be purchased by all ham operators calling in to the student ham operators.

Because of poor air conditions, they could only issue 67 certificates but some requests are still coming in. During this time, the students had contacted hams in most of the states.

The students' favorite contact is a retired employee from General Dynamics Corporation in San Diego who encourages the students in their radio work.



Alfred Hovey shows the amateur radio set on which he instructs Shawano students.

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